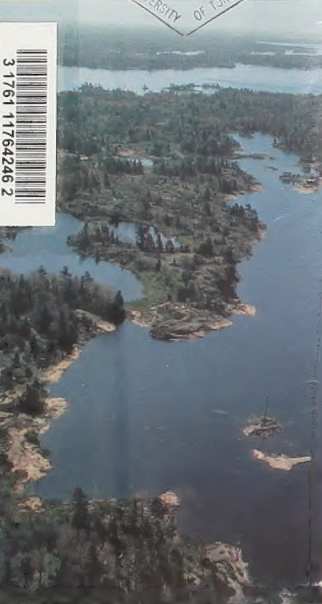


Georgian Bay Islands National Park

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Off the Cedar Spring campground, white pine along Fairy Lake



Flowerpot Island was not inhabited by Indians, as ancient taboos held this small island inviolate. Myths involving the "flowerpots" and caves evolved during the French-Indian period, but the island itself was taboo long before this time. On the upland portion of Flowerpot a wagon-width trail through a boulder field stands as evidence of possible habitation during the 18th century, although it is the only such evidence on the island.

How to get there
The park islands can be reached by boat from any mainland location in the surrounding area or via routes of the Great Lakes or Trent-Severn waterways. Many private marinas in the area have launching and boat storage facilities. The eastern sector of the park is accessible from mainland points such as Midland and Penetanguishene, along Highway 12, or Honey Harbour, at the terminus of Highway 501. Flowerpot Island may be reached from Tobermory at the terminus of Highway 6.

How to enjoy the park
Season - The park is open to the public year-round, although general weather conditions limit the summer season to May through September, and ice-conditions limit winter use to December through March. The park has facilities for docking, picnicking and tenting.

Cover: Bird's eye view of northern shore of Flowerpot Island

Introducing a park and an idea
Canada covers half a continent, fronts on three oceans, and stretches from the extreme Arctic more than halfway to the equator. There is a great variety of landforms in this immense country, and Canada's national parks have been created to preserve important examples for you and for generations to come.

The National Parks Act of 1930 specifies that national parks are "dedicated to the people . . . for their benefit, education and enjoyment" and must remain "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Georgian Bay Islands National Park is situated on the southwestern edge of the Precambrian shield and contains both the rugged terrain characteristic of the shield topography and the sedimentary deposits of younger rocks. The park, covering over five square miles, is comprised of a half hundred islands, or portions of islands, scattered over 40 miles along the Georgian Bay coastline from Mucey Bay to Moose Deer Point. It also includes one small mainland property on the southeastern shore of Georgian Bay, and 495-acre Flowerpot Island, 100 miles to the northwest, four miles off the tip of the Bruce Peninsula.

The largest island, Beausoleil, five miles long and a mile wide, is situated near Honey Harbour and contains the park administrative offices.

The islands: a legacy of the ice age
The eastern portion of the park forms part of the Precambrian shield. The ice of the Pleistocene epoch left some interesting things to see here: it polished and rounded the ancient bedrock and left various striations (grooves), but subsequent erosive action by the waters of Georgian Bay has made little impression on the hard granite and gneiss rock. These rocks have remained unchanged for the past 8,000 years.

The park's landscape is one of submerged topography - hills of ancient times have become islands or shoals, and former valleys are now deep channels or bays.

Flowerpot Island, off the northern tip of the Bruce Peninsula, is composed of limestone and is part of an escarpment that can be traced from Manitoulin Island to Niagara Falls. As the level of Lake Huron has fallen, water erosion has worked downward on the island, leaving caves and other evidence of its action high above the present level of the lake. The "flowerpots" that give the island its name are pillars of rock eroded by the waves. The tops of the pillars have been preserved because they are composed of more durable rock and because wave erosion is more effective below the water's surface.

The plants: Group of Seven country
Plantlife in Georgian Bay Islands National Park belongs to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence forest region: a mixed-

Northeastern shore of Beausoleil Island



Flowerpot Island



wood forest characterized by long-needled pines, hemlock and cedar growing among numerous deciduous tree species such as maple, beech, oak and birch.

Often portrayed in paintings by the Group of Seven, no tree is more characteristic of the eastern islands than the lone pine - its roots grasping at the shallow soil and its trunk permanently bent by prevailing winds. Mixed stands of sugar maple and red oak occupy favourable upland sites, such as the central spine of Beausoleil Island. White cedar, balsam fir, yellow birch and eastern hemlock grow in swampy areas, which are most prevalent in the southern islands.

The dominance of spruce and balsam fir on the northern islands indicates a close affinity with the boreal forest. Numerous shrubs and small trees are found under the forest canopy and along the edge of the treed areas.

Flowerpot Island contains most of the plant species common to the Bruce Peninsula, but is best known for its variety of orchids. The upland of the island is dominated by a heavy mixedwood forest, but its shoreline cliffs and limestone pavements are almost devoid of vegetation.

The animals: typical of two environments
Fauna in Georgian Bay Islands National Park, representative of both the mixedwood and deciduous forest environments, is of incredible variety. The animals found

Summer is the busiest time, but visits to the park at other seasons are increasing every year. Swimming, canoeing, boating and camping are the favourite summer activities, while winter camping and snowmobiling are increasing in popularity during the winter months.

Boating - Well-marked channels aid the general boater, while sheltered waterways make canoeing possible in all weather. Nautical chart 2201 covers the park area and coast chart 2283 covers the area from Waubesa to the western islands. These charts may be obtained at a nominal charge from the Canadian Hydrographic Service, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, 615 Booth St., Ottawa, or the Picnic Island Resort at Honey Harbour.

Fishing - Fishing is popular in Georgian Bay waters surrounding the park islands. Provincial fishing regulations apply in these waters.

Hiking - This is the only way to explore the islands. There are over 20 miles of walking trails on Beausoleil Island and all parts of the island are accessible from these paths.

Swimming - Summer activities are largely water- and camping-oriented. Excellent beaches are available to swimmers and sunbathers. Facilities here include change areas, showers and washrooms. A lifeguard is on duty daily 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during July and August.

Snowmobiles - A number of trails and campgrounds are designated for their use, and permits must be obtained from the park warden or the administration office.

Some don'ts
National parks are selected areas set apart as nature sanctuaries and special care is taken to maintain them in their natural state. For this reason, all wildlife, including birds and animals, and all plants, trees, rocks and fossils are to be left undisturbed. Even the wildflowers are not to be picked; they must be left for others to enjoy. Feeding, touching or molesting wild animals is not permitted.

Where to stay
Camping brings you into the closest contact with the park's natural environment. There are 18 primitive campgrounds on Beausoleil Island and one each on several of the islands of the eastern sector, in addition to the serviced Cedar Spring campground in the headquarters area. Facilities at the Cedar Spring campground include washrooms with showers and laundry tubs, kitchen shelters, fireplaces, picnic tables and water outlets with chlorinated water.

Visitors on overnight trail trips may camp outside the established campground provided they register with a park warden before and after each trip, and obtain a campfire permit.

Camping space is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and the maximum allowable continuous stay is three weeks. Campgrounds open about May 15 and close about September 15, depending on weather conditions.



on the archipelago are those common to the northeastern shores of Georgian Bay while those on Flowerpot are indigenous to the Bruce Peninsula.

White-tailed deer are present throughout the year and inhabit all of Beausoleil Island.

Several species of shrews are found in the area, as are numerous species of voles and mice, which form the diet of predators like the weasel and red fox. Water mammals such as muskrat, beaver, mink and otter are present, while on land snowshoe hares, cottontail rabbits, porcupines, woodchucks, raccoons, skunks and several species of squirrels and chipmunks abound.

Many species of amphibians live in the park, including the American toad, the northern spring peeper and many other varieties of frogs. While the only lizard as yet noted within the park is the blue-tailed skink, numerous turtles are known to be present.

Beausoleil Island is one of the last refuges of the massasauga rattlesnake, often called the little gray or swamp rattler, but this reptile is not plentiful and rarely comes close to people. Its favourite haunts are swamp or marshy areas abounding with the frogs and mice that form its main diet. If you should see one, stay away from it and do not provoke or try to kill it. The massasauga is not aggressive by nature. Like all wildlife in the park, this timid reptile is protected under the National Parks Act.

Fall scene at Treasure Bay on Beausoleil Island



Two large campsites on Beausoleil Island and one on Bone Island have been set aside for recognized groups. These sites are equipped with stoves, kitchen shelters and pit toilets.

Any group wishing to use these facilities, at any time of the year, may reserve in advance by writing to the Superintendent, Georgian Bay Islands National Park, Box 28, Honey Harbour, Ontario.

Other facilities
Visitors will find restaurants, grocery stores, laundries and other services, as well as transportation to the islands by water-taxi or hired cruiser, in Honey Harbour, the major mainland supply centre for visitors to the eastern islands, and in Tobermory, the main service centre for Flowerpot Island.

Fires
Campfires may be set only in fireplaces provided for this purpose, or in outdoor portable stoves. Barbecues may be used only in campgrounds or picnic areas, and all coals must be dumped into existing garbage fireplaces. Fire permits must be obtained from a park warden for open fires during trail travel.

Anyone finding an unattended fire should try to extinguish it, or if it is beyond his control, report it at once.

Birds in this area are highly diverse and numerous. During the fall and spring migration, dozens of migratory species pass through the park. Wood ducks, mallards, black ducks and coots are probably the most numerous nesting waterfowl, while American mergansers and greater and lesser scaup abound during the migration periods. In the eastern sector, the high notes of the loon can sometimes be heard in summer. Favourable shoreline and marsh areas are occupied by snipes, rails, kingbirds, red-winged blackbirds, plovers and killdeer. Great blue heron rookeries are present on Gray and Pine Islands.

Resident bird species include the pileated, downy, hairy, red-headed and black-headed three-toed woodpeckers, the yellow-shafted flicker, yellow-bellied sapsucker and the ruffed grouse. Flowerpot Island lies on the central flyway of the American woodcock migration and nesting members of this and several gull species are found on the island.

The waters surrounding the park islands support game fish common to the Georgian Bay area, including walleye, northern pike, perch, lake trout, lake whitefish, muskellunge and bass. Relics of ancient fish families such as lake sturgeon, bowfins and long-nosed gar are also found.

A brief park history
Georgian Bay Islands National Park was established in 1929. One original Indian name for Beausoleil Island was Pamedenagag - meaning "lying across the channel". Indians, early hunters and fishermen, as well as later fur traders portaged across the narrow neck of land between Ojibway and Long Bays. The name Beausoleil is said to have been given to the island by a French fur trader-fisherman who operated from the island.

During the winter of 1615 Champlain no doubt camped at the south point of Beausoleil Island, as such an encampment is mentioned in his diary. It is probable that during the flight from Christian Island a few Hurons and several French associates temporarily established themselves near Chapel Point on Beausoleil Island. The "chimneys" built of flat, unheated stone, and the grave-mounds noted in this area are evidence of this sojourn. The area known as the Treasure Pits, between the chimneys and the eastern shoreline, is believed to contain artifacts buried by the fleeing people.

During the 19th century and in the early 1900's an Indian village occupied the present headquarters area. The native peoples grew crops and sold gravel from the moraine ridge which forms the island's central spine. Artifacts of the village and the gravel pit workings, such as horseshoes, square nails and pennies, have been found in the headquarters area. The graveyard in the same area is vivid testimony of the people of this village and evidence of their dwellings is apparent on the open plain, the west shore of Frying Pan Bay. Tonch Point and the Cincinnati area on the south-east shoreline.

How to get the most out of your visit
To help you understand and appreciate the park's complex natural environment, you are urged to take advantage of the free interpretive program, conducted by the park naturalist and his trained staff. It will provide you with an insight into how climate, water, land forms, plants and animals are interrelated, and it will make your stay more rewarding.

During the day there are conducted field trips and on-site lectures. In the evening program, informative talks, slides and films are given in the outdoor theatre near the Cedar Springs campground.

Exhibits, interpretive signs, viewpoints and a self-guiding nature trail also explain the park's natural features.

Information on the interpretive program is available at the orientation trailer on the mainland property in Honey Harbour, and at the administration building on Beausoleil Island, as well as from bulletin boards and park staff.

Special groups, including school, scout and guide organizations, may take advantage of these programs.

Where to get information
Detailed information may be obtained from the park office in the headquarters area. Uniformed staff will answer questions, provide maps, outline travel routes, and refer visitors to the various areas and facilities in the park. Special events are posted on bulletin boards. Park wardens will be pleased to help visitors whenever possible.

Additional information about the park is available from the Superintendent, Georgian Bay Islands National Park, Box 28, Honey Harbour, Ontario. For information about other national parks, write to the Director, National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa 4, Ontario.

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- Highway
- Secondary Road
- Walking or Fire Trail
- Lake, River, Creek
- Campground
- Picnic Area
- Lighthouse
- Spring
- Nature Trail
- Organized Camp
- Elevation
- Cave
- Wharf, Dock
- Fire Tower

Note: This is but a reference map, designed to give you a general idea of what you will find in this park. It is *not* a road, hiking or boating map. To find your way accurately, you should obtain a topographical map, available at the park administration office.

